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Tuesday, 11 September 2018, 3 p.m.
New York

President:	Mrs. Haley	(United States of America)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mrs. Cordova Soria
	China	Mr. Wu Haitao
	Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Ipo
	Equatorial Guinea	Mr. Esono Mbengono
	Ethiopia	Ms. Guadey
	France	Mr. Delattre
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Tumysh
	Kuwait	Mr. Alotaibi
	Netherlands	Mr. Van Oosterom
	Peru	Mr. Meza-Cuadra
	Poland	Ms. Wronecka
	Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
	Sweden	Mr. Skoog
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Ms. Pierce

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Yemen to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Martin Griffiths, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, to participate in this meeting.

Mr. Griffiths is joining today's meeting via video-teleconference from Amman.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I now give the floor to Mr. Griffiths.

Mr. Griffiths: Let me first express my sympathies to you, Madam President, your Government and your people on this tragic day that we have all mourned for so long.

When I called for the intra-Yemeni consultations in Geneva, I never expected it to be an easy mission. The parties have not met for more than two years, the war has been escalating virtually on all fronts, the level of confidence is at its lowest, I believe, and the human and humanitarian cost is ever-rising. The parties have been locked into a cycle of violence. In contrast, the main victims of this war, the Yemeni people, naturally enough, have been yearning for a peaceful political solution that can end their misery, put an end to the war and deliver a Government that is in a position to address their basic needs. I have also learned that this is no longer a race between political and military institutions and solutions. It is, instead, a race to salvage what is left of State institutions as quickly as possible. It is with that sense of urgency that I was encouraged — as you know, Madam President — to move forward with the parties so as to inject a prospect of hope into this conflict and to develop an alternative narrative to the narrative of war.

Following six or seven months of intensive discussions with the parties, and based on my strong conviction, supported by the Security Council, in the need for a political solution to the conflict, I decided to call for formal consultations that would lead to a resumption of the political process. Indeed, I had the honour of being with the Council on 2 August to announce that call (see S/PV.8323). I am glad to report to the Council that, despite the absence of one of the sides to the consultations in Geneva last week, and although it certainly did not go as planned, we still managed to relaunch the political process with solid support from the Yemeni people and the international community.

Of course, I was as disappointed as anyone that we were unable to bring the delegation from Sana'a to Geneva. That is not what I had planned for last week, and I certainly would not want to see that happen again, and neither would any of us. But I will continue not to be drawn into going into the details of the many issues that we had to overcome together, even if we ultimately failed to bring the delegation to Geneva. I stress that everybody — in Geneva, in Amman, in the Coalition, in the Government of Yemen — tried to overcome the issues that were presented to us, but it simply did not work out on this occasion. I promise to make absolutely sure that does not happen again.

The Yemeni political process, like so many others of its kind, will see ups and downs. The challenges we faced last week — and I suppose this is my main messagge — remain temporary hurdles to be overcome. That is not a sign, in my view, that the political and military situation, as dire as it is — and perhaps because it is dire — is not conducive to formal consultations. We need to stay focused on nurturing the political process, particularly in these fragile early stages, and build the needed momentum so that it can deliver tangible benefits to Yemenis throughout Yemen. Such a process is not simply about holding and moving from one big and, indeed, short event to the next. Instead, it needs political will, determination and commitment from all the actors, including the members of the Council, as well as putting the interests of the Yemeni people above all else. I see my role, therefore, as working with the parties to understand their concerns, hopes and expectations, so that I can provide them with the needed help and support to move the process forward. My role, therefore, and perhaps somewhat controversially, is to encourage but not expose them, and to work with but not undermine them, all the while reminding them of the need to respect their obligations and responsibilities towards the Yemeni people and the international community.

As the parties resume the formal efforts to make compromises and build trust, it is important that we do not allow ourselves to become embroiled once again in large-scale military confrontations. As I said, the fighting is escalating on all sides, but we have still not seen an attack on the city or the port of Al-Hudaydah, although there are operations on the outskirts of the city. I hope that will continue to be the case. We are concerned about the launching of attacks by Ansar Allah forces towards Saudi Arabia, as the Council has frequently made mention, and the attacks on the Red Sea shows the ongoing threat the conflict poses for regional security.

In addition, the continued decline in the Yemeni rial and broader economic decay are pushing people further into vulnerable situations and poverty. The frustration is rising, and with it is the threat of the conflict, particularly in the south — during the past 10 days there have been widespread demonstrations in the southern governorates. The protesters give voice to their concerns over the economic situation and basic-service delivery, and they remind us of the importance of listening to southern voices and ensuring their meaningful participation in arrangements that will put an end to the conflict. I have met with several southern groups in recent months and I will be meeting with them again. They have been strongly in favour of resolving their concerns through dialogue and are keen to participate — I am glad to say — in the political process.

I will continue my discussions by holding a set of visits in the coming days, including tomorrow to Muscat and then to Sana'a, to engage with the political leadership in those two cities. I have two objectives for the visit. First, I intend to make tangible progress while building on discussions in Geneva on key confidence-building measures, including on an exchange of prisoners and the opening of Sana'a airport. I am greatly encouraged by the very positive, open and constructive approach to the issues that I have encountered by the Government of Yemen and from the coalition in their support. I am keen to outline public commitments to progressing on those issues in the coming days.

My second objective, unsurprisingly, is to secure a firm commitment from the parties to convening for continued positive consultations. I hope to meet with the Government of Yemen in Riyadh and look forward to seeing President Hadi Mansour. I must say that I am very grateful to him and his Government for their support of all the efforts that the United Nations is making to provide a political solution to the conflict. I am grateful to him and his Government as well for their delegation's presence in Geneva and for their constructive participation in rather unusual circumstances there.

I am also planning to consult soon, as I have said, with a number of southern stakeholders to agree on their meaningful participation in the process. I would like to add, not least, that we were able to enjoy the presence of a group of women from Yemen with strong specific strengths on various issues. Given that fact that there was more time available than anticipated, I believe we will have a very positive trajectory going forward as to how they will advise me and have a meaningful input into the process. The inclusivity of the process is crucial for its success, and while there are two principal parties, it would behoove me continue to seek broader consultations with people whom I think can advise me to better perform my duties.

Finally, the reason that I am so grateful to you, Madam President, for convening this meeting today, so soon after Geneva and, indeed, before I am able to outline a positive path back to peace, I would like to say this — the road to peace is never straight; it will always be difficult, particularly at a time when the process is restarting after two years of enmity, opposition, doubt, confusion and a lack of confidence. It is not surprising that there will be those who, in this case, find it difficult to attend and that there are those who did not find some element of interest. This is not the last time that we will have difficulties, but I am sure that it will be the last time that we have that particular difficulty.

But it does not mean for one minute — and this is why I am glad to be here — that the process towards peace is made more difficult. It is made more urgent. I think we learned some lessons in Geneva and, if I may, I would like to ask for the Council's continued support for the efforts of the international community and my Office, under the Secretary-General, to move back to the table with all speed.

The President: I thank Mr. Griffiths for his briefing. The challenge that he has before him is not lost on us, which is why we continue to appreciate his service.

I shall now give the floor to those Council members who wish to make statements.

Ms. Pierce (United Kingdom): I thank you, Madam President, for convening this meeting, which we appreciate very much. It was very good to hear from the Special Envoy. We appreciate the efforts he has made. We share his disappointment at the fact that the talks did not go ahead as planned, but it was good to hear that the consultations he did manage to hold yielded some positive outcomes. I think among those was the inclusivity point that Mr. Griffiths mentioned, particularly on the presence of women, which I think is excellent. But I urge all sides, including the Houthis, to get behind the process that the Special Envoy is leading, invest in confidence-building measures and engage in future consultations in good faith. That is bound to require flexibility from all sides, but we all know, and we have said many times, that there is no alternative to a political solution.

We support Mr. Griffiths and we would like to continue to support him to the hilt. We can offer Security Council members some press elements, if that would be welcome, as a way of expressing that the Council stands behind him at this time as he tries to bring all the parties back together. I think that what he said about the economy of Yemen just gives added urgency to an already desperate situation. I therefore hope we can all build on that.

Mr. Van Oosterom (Netherlands): First, let me thank Special Envoy Martin Griffiths for his realistic briefing to us today, as well as for his persistence and resilience.

I will address three issues: first, the political process; secondly, the effects of the conflict on the civilian population; and, thirdly, the humanitarian situation.

First, with regard to the political process, we share Martin's disappointment that one party did not make it to the highly anticipated consultations in Geneva last weekend. However, the beginning of those kinds of consultations is never easy, especially not following two years of growing distrust between the parties since the last negotiations took place, in Kuwait. Confidence has to be rebuilt one step at a time, and we commend Martin's efforts in making that happen.

Confidence-building measures, as proposed and discussed in Geneva, are focused on the most crucial of issues that we face in Yemen — the well-being of ordinary Yemeni citizens and issues such as resuming medical flights out of Sana'a airport and addressing Yemen's failing economy. We strongly support that approach and call on the parties to show good faith at this critical juncture. They should engage with the Special Envoy by taking meaningful steps to achieve them.

This weekend's minor setback can, and must, be overcome. It should not be used to justify an escalation on the battlefield. A sustainable, peaceful, political solution is the only way forward. Unfortunately, already we have seen an increase in clashes in Al-Hudaydah, as well as enhanced tensions in Aden. We call on all sides to demonstrate their commitment to peace. They should show restraint, de-escalate and engage without preconditions with the United Nations-facilitated process.

Let me also take this opportunity to express particular appreciation for Martin's efforts in strengthening female participation in the process, a point which he just elaborated.

Secondly, with regard to the effects of the conflict on the civilian population, the last time the Council met in consultations we discussed the worrying spike in civilian casualties as hostilities increased. Since then, we have witnessed more violations of international humanitarian law. Those violations include an attack on a World Food Programme food truck, an air strike in Ad Durayhimi and the injuring of civilians as a result of a shot-down Houthi missile. We condemn those practices. As the Council, we must continue to send a clear signal that all parties must comply with international humanitarian law and should address its violations. Accountability must continue to feature high on our agenda, including to sustain a future political agreement.

Thirdly, with regard to the humanitarian situation, the concerns raised by the Special Envoy about the devastating humanitarian impact of any further escalation in Al-Hudaydah and Aden are as prominent as they have ever been, and the Council has expressed itself several times in that regard. In line with the presidential statement of March (S/PRST/2018/5), we continue to insist on the full and sustained opening of the ports of Al-Hudaydah and Saleef, as well as the unimpeded distribution of supplies throughout the country. That includes access for ships carrying containers and fuel, as facilitated by the United Nations Verification and Inspection Mechanism.

In conclusion, the reinvigoration of the political process and bringing it to a successful resolution will likely be a long process. The first steps have now been

taken. In order to keep the process moving all parties need to take their responsibility. They need to move beyond words and show their commitment by taking concrete steps to restore confidence. We will stay closely engaged as Mr. Griffiths' work progresses. Let me express the hope that the Security Council will stay united in supporting the Special Envoy in finding a peaceful, political and sustainable solution in the interests of the people of Yemen.

Mr. Delattre (France) (*spoke in French*): First of all, I would like to thank Mr. Martin Griffiths for his briefing and tireless efforts to bring together the parties to engage in discussion. I repeat that Martin has the full support of France. I would like to convey three brief messages, before I address some of the points in greater detail during the consultations that follow.

France regrets that the talks planned in Geneva at the invitation of the United Nations could not be held. As Mr. Griffiths eloquently recalled, it is essential to safeguard the possibility for restarting the dialogue. Geneva might be a missed opportunity in that regard, but it is by no means the end of efforts to move the political process forward.

My third message is that, more than ever, we must call on the parties to remain engaged with the Special Envoy in order to resume dialogue as soon as possible and move forward the political process, which is the only possible solution to the conflict in Yemen, as we all know. United Nations mediation is the only path towards a relaunching discussions with a view to reaching an agreement on the management of the Al-Hudaydah port, a resumption of talks, a lasting cessation of hostilities and the setting of the parameters for a political solution. The time is ripe for the implementation of the confidence-building measures identified by the Special Envoy, with a view to a sustainable, comprehensive and inclusive political agreement.

My third message is a matter of urgency. The quest for a political solution is not only essential but also urgent, while the humanitarian situation, already disastrous, continues to deteriorate. Only a political solution will make it possible to put a lasting end to the suffering of the Yemeni people. Such a solution will require resolute and unanimous support from the members of the Security Council for the efforts of Mr. Griffiths — support that is in place — but it will also require, in more proactive terms, coherent messages from us collectively to the parties to the conflict and regional actors alike.

At the moment, the population of Yemen is surviving only thanks to the extraordinary efforts undertaken by the United Nations and humanitarian actors on the ground, whom I salute. We reiterate in the strongest terms: it is imperative that international humanitarian law and human rights law be respected. In that regard, swift and unimpeded humanitarian access must be guaranteed to populations in need. Those obligations, it must be hammered home, are incumbent upon all.

That is the spirit in which France will continue to strive towards the goals I have just recalled, sparing no effort as we work with all the relevant actors to those ends.

Mr. Skoog (Sweden): I can be quite brief. I will not repeat our longstanding and well known positions on the broader humanitarian and political situation. However, I wanted to take the floor to express our appreciation to Martin Griffiths for his briefing and, more important, for the very determined and energetic efforts he is making in Geneva.

Despite the challenges and temporary setbacks, I think it is important to echo what he was saying: things are difficult; it is understandable that there are challenges after years of conflict and distrust. We are encouraged by the launch of the consultations and the steps taken in Geneva. The discussion with the Government in Yemen on vital confidence-building measures related to Sana'a airport, medical flights, the release of prisoners and the economy is one such promising step. We therefore commend the Government for its constructive engagement.

We join others in welcoming the active participation of the technical advisory group of Yemeni women.

It is regrettable that the Houthis did not make it to Geneva — an opportunity that they should have seized. Nevertheless, we are happy to note the Special Envoy's assessment that there is willingness to take the political process forward, and we strongly urge the parties to engage. We support the approach outlined by Mr. Griffiths today for moving forward by travelling to Sana'a and the region to continue the political consultations building on the discussions in Geneva.

However, now more than ever, it is crucial that the emphasis remain on the political track. With that in mind, we are concerned about the rocket attacks against

Saudi Arabia, the latest escalation in Al-Hudaydah, reports of intensified clashes and air strikes, as well as of the unrest in the South. Again, all of that results in unacceptable levels of civilian casualties. We therefore once again remind the parties that a full-scale escalation in Al-Hudaydah would aggravate the humanitarian disaster even further and risk hundreds of thousands of lives, while clearly undermining the political process. Yemen's ports, including those at Al-Hudaydah and Saleef, must remain open and functioning to allow for unhindered humanitarian and commercial imports.

Now is the time for the Security Council and the broader international community to renew our support for the United Nations Special Envoy and to call on the parties to de-escalate, respect international humanitarian law, ensure accountability and engage in an inclusive United Nations-led political process without preconditions. If we could express that through a press statement or something of the like, as suggested by my British colleague, we would be in favour.

Mr. Meza-Cuadra (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): We are grateful to you, Madam President, for having organized this meeting, and to Mr. Griffiths for his important briefing. We wish to commend and support the efforts of the Special Envoy in the pursuit of lasting peace in Yemen. We agree with him that, despite the difficulties, common ground exists around which Yemenis could converge towards a peaceful solution. That is something that we could not say at the beginning of this year.

We are concerned that it was not possible for the Geneva consultations to proceed as planned due to the absence of the Houthi delegation. We view that as a setback that must be overcome. But under no circumstances should that setback be interpreted as justification for an escalation of fighting. We must bear in mind the responsibility to prevent any exacerbation of the situation, which already constitutes the worst humanitarian crisis in the world today. On the contrary, the complexity of the context and the mistrust and distance between the parties are such that we should step up our efforts to get them at last around the negotiating table without preconditions.

Against that backdrop, we must record our concern at the upsurge in violence seen in recent days and its cost in humanitarian terms. It is our responsibility to protect the civilian population, in accordance with international humanitarian law. We stress that there can be no recurrence of, or impunity for, atrocities against the civilian population such as those observed last month, including the attack that claimed the lives of dozens of children, as well as terrorism and indiscriminate attacks against the territory of Saudi Arabia.

I conclude by reaffirming Peru's commitment to achieving a lasting peace in Yemen that ends the humanitarian disaster, fosters regional stability and ensures accountability for the atrocity crimes that have been committed.

Mrs. Cordova Soria (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): We are grateful for the briefing provided by the Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Yemen, Mr. Martin Griffiths. We take this opportunity to convey to him our full support in his duties and in his tireless efforts to find a peaceful solution to the conflict in Yemen.

We took note of the outcome of the consultations held in Geneva under the auspices of the United Nations, despite the fact that all the interested parties were not present. Nonetheless, we recognize the full validity and legitimacy of the process of consultations and dialogue as the only way to advance the political negotiation process towards a peaceful solution to the situation in Yemen. In that regard, we call on the relevant parties and actors to constructively participate in and contribute to the process of dialogue and avoid confrontational and violent rhetoric.

As the Special Envoy noted, there is undoubtedly a real need to work on confidence-building measures to bring the parties closer together, and dialogue must be stepped up on key issues, such as the opening of routes and roads to enhance the deployment of humanitarian and medical assistance, the permanent reopening of the Sana'a airport and, above all, the de-escalation of the conflict zones, which includes stability and full operations at the port of Al-Hudaydah.

Also, it is important to reiterate to the parties that any attack or military campaign that targets civilians or public spaces, housing or medical and educational health centres, as well as the launching of missiles and the deployment of antipersonnel mines, is contrary to international law and international humanitarian law. We therefore we call on them to observe the fundamental principles and rules of distinction, proportionality and precaution in the military campaigns that they carry out, while avoiding causing unnecessary suffering to the civilian population, especially to women and children.

We reiterate again that there is no military or otherwise confrontational solution to the conflict in Yemen. For that reason, all the stakeholders and parties involved should cease violence and commit themselves to complying with the contents of the Council's presidential statements of 15 March 2018 (S/PRST/2018/5) and 15 June 2017 (S/PRST/2017/7) and fully implement the provisions of resolution 2216 (2015), while abandoning all preconditions for starting dialogue, stopping hostilities immediately and committing to establish a process of negotiation that allows for agreement on a political solution that satisfies the demands and aspirations of the Yemeni people against that backdrop of respecting their sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity. In that regard, we recall the words of the Secretary-General on 13 April here in the Chamber:

> "There is only one pathway to ending the Yemeni conflict and to addressing the humanitarian crisis: a negotiated political settlement through inclusive intra-Yemeni dialogue." (*S/PV.8231, p. 2*)

Finally, in order to achieve that objective, my delegation reiterates its utmost support for the mediation and dialogue efforts that the Special Envoy has initiated and continues to develop with the parties.

Mr. Tumysh (Kazakhstan): I join others in expressing appreciation to Special Envoy Martin Griffiths for his clear and comprehensive update and efforts to bring about a political and humanitarian solution in Yemen. My delegation also welcomes the Permanent Representative of Yemen, His Excellency Ambassador Ahmad Bin Mubarak, to the Chamber.

Kazakhstan is closely following recent developments and would like to make the following two points today.

First, on the political track, we note the importance of continuing to strive towards sustainable peace, conflict prevention and resolution through political and diplomatic means, including confidence-building measures, as mentioned today by the Special Envoy and the Permanent Representative of Sweden, and which are also very important to us, as the country that created the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-building Measures in Asia, an organization for confidence-building measures in Asia. That would foster trust by bringing the parties together around the common goals of peace and development.

We are closely following the recent United Nations diplomatic efforts in Geneva, Sana'a and Riyadh, and soon in Muscat, to persuade the warring parties to return to the difficult but much-needed negotiations. Undoubtedly, the diplomatic moves led by the Special Envoy have helped Yemen a great deal, and Al-Hudaydah in particular. Kazakhstan supports the efforts of interested countries and parties to reach a political path through negotiations for a full and fair settlement, including at the political consultations in Geneva. Only such an approach could preserve the sovereignty, independence and unity of Yemen and realize the interests and aspirations of its people.

Secondly, with regard to the humanitarian dimension, we voice our support for the United Nations repeated calls on all parties to safeguard civilian lives, prevent deaths and injuries, allow the freedom of movement and protect hospitals, clinics and schools. That should be in accordance with relevant types of international law. We therefore note and welcome the coordinated efforts of the stakeholders — United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations and the Gulf countries — to provide humanitarian assistance to the people of Al-Hudaydah. Kazakhstan salutes the selfless work of the humanitarian partners who have been providing food, water, emergency kits, cash and health care. To our deep regret, 75 per cent of the Yemeni population still require protection from malnutrition, cholera and other diseases, which have killed or afflicted thousands of civilians, especially after a very hot summer season. Against that background, we express hope that critical health infrastructure, and in particular reproductive health centres, sanitation facilities and water plants and stations that supply water to the population, will be thoroughly protected.

Finally, Kazakhstan supports the Special Envoy and his able team, as well as their untiring efforts to reach an inclusive political solution, in close cooperation with the stakeholders concerned.

Ms. Wronecka (Poland): Let me begin by thanking Mr. Griffiths for his comprehensive briefing.

We welcome the process of consultations with the parties to the conflict launched last week in Geneva, which we consider to be an important step towards relaunching a political process in Yemen. We commend the fact that essential confidence-building measures — including, among other things the release of prisoners, the reopening of the Sana'a

airport and economic issues — were discussed with the representatives of the Yemeni Government. We also welcome and are encouraged by the holding of consultations with a group of Yemeni women, and we commend the Special Envoy's efforts to ensure that the process is inclusive. However, while we regret that the representatives of Houthis were not present in Geneva, that should not be perceived as an obstacle for further advancement of political dialogue.

Reviving the political process, which would lead to a comprehensive and long-standing solution to the conflict, is of paramount importance and must be a priority for all stakeholders. Therefore, we expect the parties to redouble their efforts to achieve that goal. We urge them to continue to engage with Mr. Griffiths in good faith and without preconditions and to show greater flexibility toward his proposals. We look forward to the continuation of the consultations in Muscat and Sana'a.

Despite the progress achieved on the political track, the fighting in Yemen has become even more intense in the past few weeks. We are alarmed by the continued reports of attacks resulting in casualties among civilians. Poland condemns all indiscriminate attacks against the civilian population, which are in clear violation of international humanitarian law. We urge the parties to de-escalate and refrain from taking actions that would lead to increased violence. We urge the parties to abide by the principles of international humanitarian law, including the fundamental principles of proportionality and distinction in attack, and to ensure the protection of civilians. We also expect them to ensure that all Yemen's ports, including Al-Hudaydah, Saleef and Ras Isa, are open and fully operational, and that access for humanitarian deliveries across the whole country is guaranteed.

Let me conclude by reiterating that there can only be a political solution to the conflict in Yemen, and by once again expressing Poland's full support for Special Envoy Martin Griffiths and his efforts to bring about an inclusive political solution to that crisis.

Mr. Alotaibi (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General to Yemen, Mr. Martin Griffiths, for his briefing. We underscore our support and confidence for his efforts. We also thank all the United Nations personnel who are working on the ground in Yemen, and we commend all their work and sacrifices.

We listened closely to the briefing by Mr. Griffiths on the United Nations efforts to hold intra-Yemeni consultations in Geneva, which regrettably have not materialized owing to the absence of the Houthis, despite conducive conditions being established for the holding of those consultations and all the attempts to overcome the impediments to their participation. The unrealized consultations provided an opportunity to distinguish between the party seeking a political solution, based on relevant Security Council resolutions, and the party that does not seek to achieve any progress in the political process in Yemen and obstructs international and regional efforts to reach a political solution, while perpetuating the crisis and exacerbating the humanitarian suffering of the brotherly Yemeni people, who seek a peaceful and stable life.

The absence of Houthis in the consultations demonstrates their indifference to the statements of the Security Council calling for consultations and urging all parties to participate constructively therein. Therefore, the Security Council has to shoulder its responsibilities and to insist on the full implementation of its resolutions, leading to security and stability in Yemen and giving priority to a political solution based on the three agreed terms of reference, namely, the Gulf Cooperation Council Initiative and its implementation mechanism, the outcome of the national dialogue and the relevant Security Council resolutions, in particular resolution 2216 (2015).

The States of the coalition to support legitimacy in Yemen have proved once again their open support for the efforts of the United Nations and the Special Envoy through their announcements confirming their support for a political solution and the presence of their accredited ambassadors to Yemen at the Geneva consultations in order to participate in the briefings that were supposed to be given by Mr. Griffiths at the margin of those consultations. The States of the coalition also announced that they would grant flight permission to the aircraft that was supposed to transport the Houthi delegation to Geneva in order to participate in the consultations. In addition, they stopped their military operations in Al-Hudaydah in order to help the international efforts to promote the peace operation in Yemen.

In most of its outcomes, the Security Council has been persistent in asserting that the optimal solution to any dispute involves addressing its root causes. It is evident to everybody that the root cause of the conflict

is the September 2014 coup by the Houthis against the legitimate Government in Yemen. The Security Council must therefore work to shoulder the collective responsibility in fully implementing its resolutions and translating its words into deeds.

We reaffirm our support for the efforts of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, who has reiterated the wish of the international community to find a political solution to the crisis based on the aforementioned three terms of reference. That would end the humanitarian suffering of the brotherly Yemeni people and the threats to international and regional security posed by the Houthis, who continue to target the territories of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia with ballistic missiles and to threaten the safety of the international maritime navigation in Bab Al-Mandab and the Red Sea.

In conclusion, we welcome the United Kingdom's intention to address the media.

Mr. Esono Mbengono (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, let me thank the delegation of the United Kingdom for requesting this meeting and the delegation of the United States for convening it. We are also grateful to Mr. Martin Griffiths for his excellent and enlightening briefing and his tireless work to achieve peace in Yemen.

In August, the delegation of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea expressed its support for the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen in holding consultations with the warring parties, on 6 September in Geneva, in order to initiate confidence-building measures for the peace process. In that regard, we support Mr. Griffiths efforts to oversee the consultations and for all that he has been able to achieve in his meetings with the Yemeni Government delegation, headed by the Yemeni Minister for Foreign Affairs. At the same time, we express our concern about the absence of the Houthi delegation at that very important meeting. For us, the Geneva conference represented an opportunity for the belligerent parties to initiate and support a new process that would not only help stop hostilities, but also pave the road towards facilitating negotiations leading to the parties' reconciliation and achieving lasting and sustainable peace in Yemen.

Equatorial Guinea is deeply concerned about the vulnerable situation of civilians in the nearly three-year conflict, with no immediate solution in sight, which clearly will prolong the suffering of the most vulnerable — the defenceless civilian population. My delegation therefore calls on all parties involved in the conflict — in keeping with the outcome of the meeting held in Geneva — to understand that a political process characterized by frank and inclusive dialogue, while respecting human rights, international humanitarian law and the relevant Security Council resolutions, is the only way to find a lasting solution to the crisis.

As the facts on the ground have repeatedly demonstrated, there is no military solution to the conflict. My delegation categorically condemns any form of violence that targets civilian populations. Conversely, we believe that civilians in need must be provided with access to humanitarian assistance.

In conclusion, we commend and are grateful for the work of the Security Council, which, despite the difficulties that it faces, ceaselessly continues to devise solutions to restore peace and stability in Yemen.

Mr. Ipo (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): My delegation welcomes the holding of this Security Council briefing to update us on the most recent developments in the Yemeni conflict, in particular the continued fighting between Government forces and the Houthi rebels, the political process for exiting the crisis and the humanitarian situation. My delegation thanks Mr. Martin Griffiths, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, for his excellent briefing.

Despite the calls of the international community for an immediate end to hostilities, fighting continues, in particular in the strategic port city of Al-Hudaydah, which since 8 September has been the theatre of violent clashes between pro-Government forces and Houthi rebels. According to corresponding reports from medical sources and hospitals, the toll includes 84 killed combatants, of whom 73 were Houthi rebels and 11 were members of pro-Government forces. Overall, the United Nations estimates that the conflict claimed 6,660 civilian victims from March 2015 to August 2018, although the levels of violence during the clashes and the sophisticated nature of the weapons and methods deployed by the belligerents would lead us to believe that the number of victims could be higher. With regard to the atrocities committed throughout Yemen since the beginning of the conflict in 2014, Côte d'Ivoire calls for those responsible for those acts to be held accountable and for all parties to respect international humanitarian law. My country also urges them to refrain from hindering the delivery of humanitarian aid in any way,

which, under international law, can be prosecuted before the relevant international competent courts.

In addition to the heavy toll caused by the clashes and their humanitarian consequences, the impasse of the Geneva talks between Houthis and Yemeni Government representatives is a source of great concern to Côte d'Ivoire. Hope for the resumption of dialogue among the Yemeni enemy brothers quickly faded owing to the absence of representatives of the rebel forces at the negotiations held on 6 September in Geneva. Despite that failure and the widespread pessimistic about the prospects for a rapid resumption of negotiations, my delegation believes that the United Nations must use every means at its disposal within the framework of preventive diplomacy to bring the parties to the conflict together to resume talks. To that end, my delegation encourages the work of Mr. Martin Griffiths, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, and urges him to pursue his mediation and his good offices in his contact with Houthi and Yemeni Government representatives. We take this opportunity to call for a greater role in this effort to be played by regional actors, in particular regional organizations, in working harder to advance dialogue aimed at achieving a solution to the Yemeni crisis.

My country's faith in dialogue as the peaceful means of settling conflicts and the most effective tool of preventive diplomacy leads us to believe with firm conviction that there will be no lasting peace in Yemen without an inclusive political process. Côte d'Ivoire calls once again on the warring parties to lay down their weapons so as to establish an environment conducive to resuming talks, which is the only way to exit the current impasse and turn hopes for lasting peace into the reality dearly sought by millions of Yemenis.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank the United Kingdom for convening today's meeting. We also thank Mr. Martin Griffiths, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, for his detailed briefing on the work with the parties to the Yemeni conflict, including within the framework of the latest consultations in Geneva. Russia supported and contributed to achieving the initiative of the Special Envoy and launching the negotiation process. We believe that this is very much needed and is a unique opportunity to end the bloody conflict.

We did not expect that it would be easy or perhaps even possible to move the Yemeni conflict to the political sphere. We believe that the process has been launched and must now be built upon. We pin our hopes on Mr. Griffiths convincing the parties that they need to continue the political process in the framework of shuttle diplomacy and to make them aware that a military solution is not viable and has no future. It is important that he maintain open channels of communication with all key players.

We consider that the support of his mediation mission, along with the absence of attacks and missile launches, will contribute to maintaining a calm situation around Al-Hudaydah. Everyone must demonstrate restraint and not try to resolve the situation by force. Developing confidence-building measures, including the release of prisoners and detainees is necessary. We would like to add that it is important to unify the efforts of all Yemenis in combating terrorism on the Arabian peninsula, which has taken on a threatening scale.

We believe that the potential for collective international support for the efforts of the Special Envoy has not been fully utilized. In our view, what is needed is an effective, balanced and focused format of support for the efforts of the United Nations. It is critical that the format operate on an integrated basis. We would like to underline that finding solutions to the Yemeni conflict will be an important contribution to stability in the entire subregion.

We wish to remind the Council of our proposals to launch — in the Persian Gulf and, in the long-run, in the whole Middle East — a process of developing a package of security- and confidence-building measures. That kind of architecture, in which all key countries of the region should participate, including the Persian Gulf States and Iran, would contribute not only to strengthening comprehensive and indivisible security in that part of the world, but also resolving long-standing and newer crisis situations, including the Yemeni conflict.

Threats and confrontations should cede place to dialogue to dialogue and cooperation. Russia will continue, in consultation with all interested parties, its efforts aimed at implementing the Russian concept of security and cooperation in the Persian Gulf. We believe that it is timely and necessary.

In conclusion, we call on all parties involved in the Yemeni conflict to actively participate in the mediation efforts of Mr. Griffiths. There is no military solution to the Yemeni crisis. For our part, we will continue to

support the work of the Special Envoy, alongside all of the parties to the Yemeni confrontation.

Mr. Wu Haitao (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): We thank the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, Mr. Martin Griffiths, for his briefing and we commend his tireless efforts to facilitate the relaunching of the intra-Yemeni dialogue. China regrets that the parties failed to seize the opportunity represented by the United Nations-sponsored Geneva consultations in Yemen, which were not held as planned. The Special Envoy indicated that he would remain engaged with various parties in Yemen in order to bring them back to the track of political dialogue. We commend his efforts.

Soon after taking office, the newly appointed Chinese Ambassador to Yemen went to Geneva to meet with the Special Envoy and other stakeholders, thereby demonstrating China's willingness to actively advance the political settlement process. China will continue to provide its constructive support to the Yemeni political process.

At present, the protracted conflict and worsening humanitarian situation profoundly impact regional peace, stability and security. The Yemeni people and the international community fully expect that the Yemeni issue can be restored to the political track. We hope that parties with influence will continue to push the Yemeni parties to demonstrate a spirit of reconciliation, narrow their differences and prevent the escalation of the conflict so as to achieve peace, security and stability in Yemen as soon as possible.

A political settlement is the only way to achieve lasting peace in Yemen. The international community should continue to support Yemen's sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity. It should also support the good offices and efforts of the United Nations and the Special Envoy, push for the early resumption of intra-Yemeni dialogue and build a sustained political process on the basis of relevant Council resolutions, the Gulf Cooperation Council Initiative and its implementation mechanism, and the outcome of the National Dialogue Conference in Yemen. An inclusive settlement can be reached through dialogue and reconciliation.

It is important to ensure unhindered humanitarian access. That is critical. The relevant parties should come together in order to ensure safe and unimpeded humanitarian assistance so as to create conditions conducive to alleviating humanitarian suffering in Yemen. China stands ready, alongside the international community, to support the Special Envoy in continuing his constructive role in moving forward the process to settle the Yemeni issue.

Ms. Guadey (Ethiopia): We thank the delegation of the United Kingdom for requesting this meeting. We also thank Special Envoy Martin Griffiths for his briefing. We continue to support his tireless efforts to facilitate a political solution to the crisis in Yemen and we commend his diplomatic endeavours to relaunch the political process after two years.

We know that this will not be an easy task and we understand the difficulties encountered. Nevertheless, we agree with the Special Envoy that the Geneva consultations mark the beginning of the process and we encourage him to persist in his efforts. We commend the Yemeni Government for participating in the Geneva consultations and for engaging constructively with the Special Envoy on issues related to the peace process, and particularly on confidence-building measures.

On the other hand, it is regrettable that the Houthis did not attend the consultations. We understand that the Special Envoy will be meeting with the representatives of the Houthis in the coming days, and we hope they will demonstrate the political commitment necessary to meaningfully and constructively engage with the Special Envoy.

At this critical juncture, we believe that the Council should continue to support the Special Envoy as he makes every possible effort to fully restart the political process, which we believe is the only way to end the suffering of the Yemeni people and to address the legitimate security concerns of regional actors.

The President: I will now make a statement in my national capacity.

I thank Mr. Martin Griffiths for coming back to brief us. We obviously share his frustration that the Houthis did not show up in Geneva. He did everything he could to get them there. The Houthis should know that the members of the Security Council are not going to tolerate attempts to undermine the efforts of the United Nations. While Geneva did not work as we had hoped, it is urgent to find a way to bring the parties to the table. That is why we are here. We want to give Mr. Griffiths the strongest possible backing so that he can go back and tell everyone that they have got to commit to peace in Yemen.

The stakes on all sides are so high. It would be a mistake for the parties to dismiss the idea of peace talks and resort to military options. The temperature is rising across the region because of this war. Ballistic missile attacks into Saudi territory continue. There are threats to freedom of navigation in the Red Sea. Chaos in Yemen is spilling across its borders. We are potentially one missile strike away from a full-blown crisis. There is an alternative.

As we heard today, there is a remarkable degree of Security Council unity on Yemen. Everyone around the table wants to see diplomacy succeed. The parties must act to help the Yemeni people. They can do things right now that will actually make the Yemeni people better off instead of accelerating this humanitarian catastrophe. They can help the Yemeni people by finding a way to pay the salaries of teachers and allowing kids to go back to school, which is a step that any parent in this Chamber can immediately understand.

They can help by opening up access to medical flights so that ordinary Yemenis who desperately need medical treatment abroad for conditions like cancer or dialysis can get help. They can help by doing everything they can to avoid targeting civilians and civilian objects, and by holding accountable those responsible for civilian casualties. They can help by making sure that humanitarian aid and life-saving commercial goods reach Yemenis who need it through all of the country's ports, including Al-Hudaydah.

We know that Mr. Griffiths is working on many of those points, as well as others. We urge the parties to make rapid progress on getting those things done before convening for a new round of talks. There should be no question of the confidence the Security Council has in Martin Griffiths. We are losing time and patience. All sides would be wise to work with Martin and reach out to him immediately.

I now resume my functions as the President of the Security Council.

I now give the floor to the representative of Yemen.

Mr. Bin Mubarak (Yemen) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to congratulate your country, Madam President, on assuming the presidency of the Security Council this month and to wish the United States delegation every success. We also thank you for this opportunity to address the Council.

On this sad day for the friendly American people, we express our condolences to the American people and Government, as well as to the families of the victims of 11 September 2001 terrorist attack.

We would also like to commend the representative of the United Kingdom, Ambassador Karen Pierce, for her wise stewardship of the Council's work last month.

The delegation of Yemen went to the Geneva consultations in good faith on the date and place indicated, bringing with it the pain and hope of the Yemeni people for concrete progress that would reflect positively on their lives. At the invitation extended to us by Mr. Martin Griffiths to attend the consultations, His Excellency President Hadi Mansour was personally committed to ensuring that they were successful. He was in constant coordination with our team and with the Yemeni people with a view to reviving hopes for achieving the long-awaited peace.

The Government of Yemen has demonstrated and will continue to demonstrate its full support for the Special Envoy. We commend his efforts to ensure the progress of the peace process and his sincere attempts to bring together the Government's delegation with the party involved in the coup d'état after more than two years. We will be involved in all efforts aimed at reviving peace, restoring the State and putting an end to the coup d'état.

The Security Council has overseen that process with great care and attention. On the eve of the negotiations, the Council issued a press statement (SC/13484) in which it reiterated its call for the full implementation of its resolutions and statements, including resolution 2216 (2015). The Council also called on the parties to take advantage of this opportunity to ease tensions and participate fully, constructively and in good faith to build confidence and take the first step towards putting an end to the conflict, which has caused so much suffering for the Yemeni people.

The Houthis, on their side and with their well-known irresponsibility, did not attend to the talks. In fact, with a great deal of arrogance they exploited the interest and efforts of the international community to achieve peace in Yemen and avoid a military solution. That militia has an erroneous interpretation of some reports issued by certain international organizations.

I recall our letter to the Council dated 24 August, just a few days before the start of those negotiations,

regarding the meeting of the Head of the coup delegation with Hassan Nasrallah. We said that this would have a negative impact on the consultations and would demonstrate the extent to which the Houthis are linked to Iran and its proxies in the region. In fact, they are trying to establish an Iranian model in Yemen, which the Yemeni people and its leadership will never accept.

Before its delegation went to Geneva, the Government of my country underscored that it was necessary to prioritize confidence-building measures agreed upon during the Biel peace negotiations in 2015. Emphasis needed to be placed on the humanitarian aspects, including the release of prisoners and hostages, and on ensuring access to humanitarian aid without interference or obstacles. It was necessary to focus on measures that would strengthen the capacity of the Yemeni Central Bank in order to ease the suffering of the people and resume the payment of salaries. In fact, the Government made efforts and worked with the Office of the Special Envoy on all those points.

The Houthis have tried to impose preconditions to their participation at all stages of peace negotiations. They have tried to undermine the efforts of the Special Envoy by creating obstacles, in spite of all the flexibility and logistical support provided by the Office of the Special Envoy, as well as the coalition to restore legitimacy in Yemen. The coalition showed maximum restraint. In spite of that, missiles continue to be launched against populated Yemeni cities and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

It is regrettable that certain words are used to justify that kind of behaviour, which represents an evident challenge to the international community. Failure to describe what is happening accurately in Yemen will not help to resolve that crisis. What is happening, in fact, is not a dispute between parties to a conflict, as some have described, but a coup against a constitutionally legitimate Government elected by an overwhelming majority of Yemenis after a comprehensive political settlement followed by national dialogue. It is a coup d'état conducted by an ideological armed group that has nothing but arrogance and disdain for Yemenis and believes that it has a God-given right to govern. From the very first day of the coup d'état, that group has tried not only to overthrow the Government and even the whole State, but to undermine the very foundation of our country and change its national characteristics. It has been implementing ideology-driven sectarian programmes to change the common denominator that unites Yemenis and to destroy their social fabric and national pillars.

On behalf of my country's Government and the suffering mothers, children and the injured, and in the name of those who have been killed and the prisoners and detainees, I reiterate my call on the United Nations and the Security Council to assume direct responsibility and to implement their resolutions. It is essential to force that coup group to respect the will of the Yemeni people and the international community in order to achieve a lasting peace based on the three terms of reference, namely, the Gulf Initiative and its implementation mechanism, the outcome of the national dialogue and the resolutions of the Security Council, in particular resolution 2216 (2015).

This month marks the anniversary of the 26 September revolution, which the Yemenis supported in order to put an end to the sectarianism that dominated the country during the ruling of former imams. That rebel group is trying to revive the past, but I can assure members of the Council that this will never happen because we believe in the September and October revolutions and are ready to defend them, along with their ultimate goals that were written with the blood of Yemeni people.

Before concluding, I want to show those present a picture, which I believe to be more eloquent than a thousand words. The picture is of Abdel-Rahman Akram Atran, a 10-year old Yemeni child, who died two days ago after he was shot in the head. While he was playing, his football touched the leg of a Houthi leader by mistake. That Houthi leader simply took out his pistol and shot the child in the head. The incident happened in the city of Ibb in Yemen. The child is the son of a professor at Sana'a University. How long will the suffering continue to be inflicted on the children and women by the coup group, which defies the whole world and tries to impose the law of the jungle?

The President: There are no more names inscribed on the list. I now invite the members of the Council to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 4.20 p.m.